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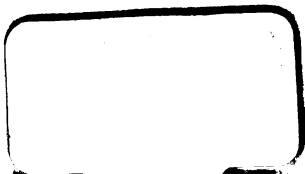
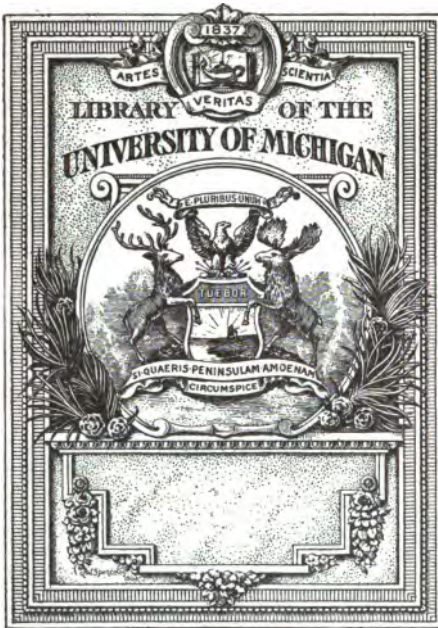
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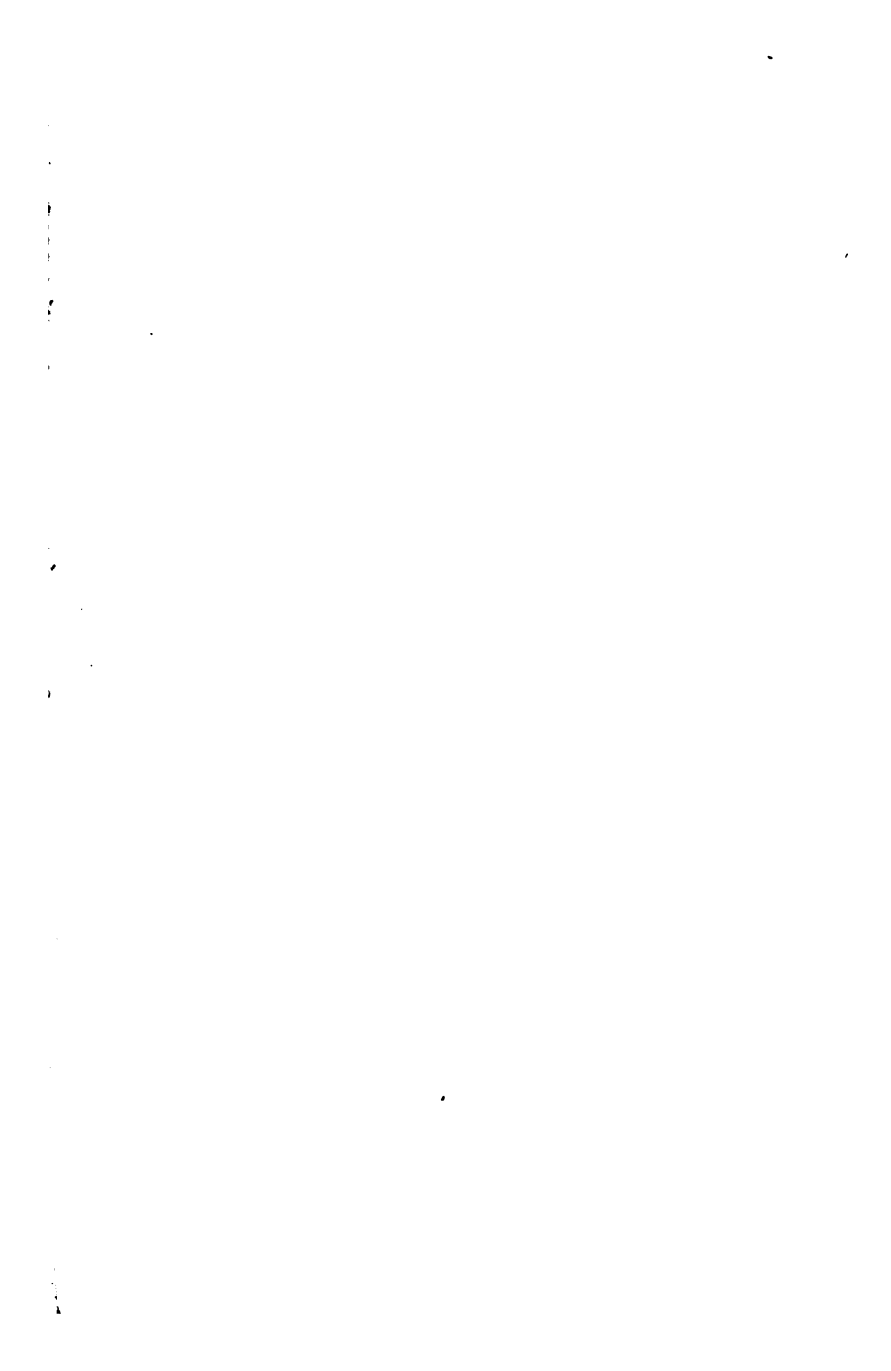
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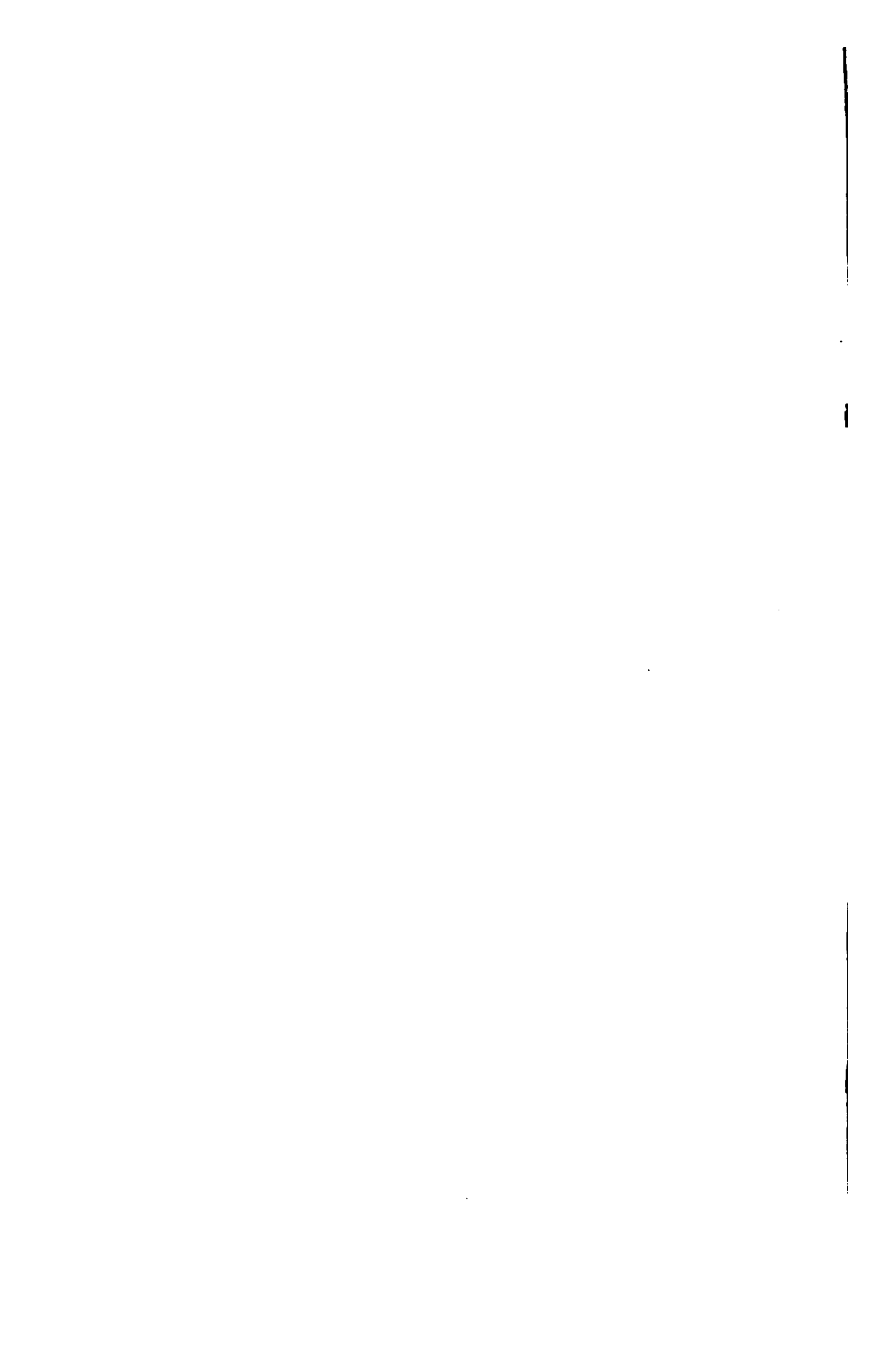


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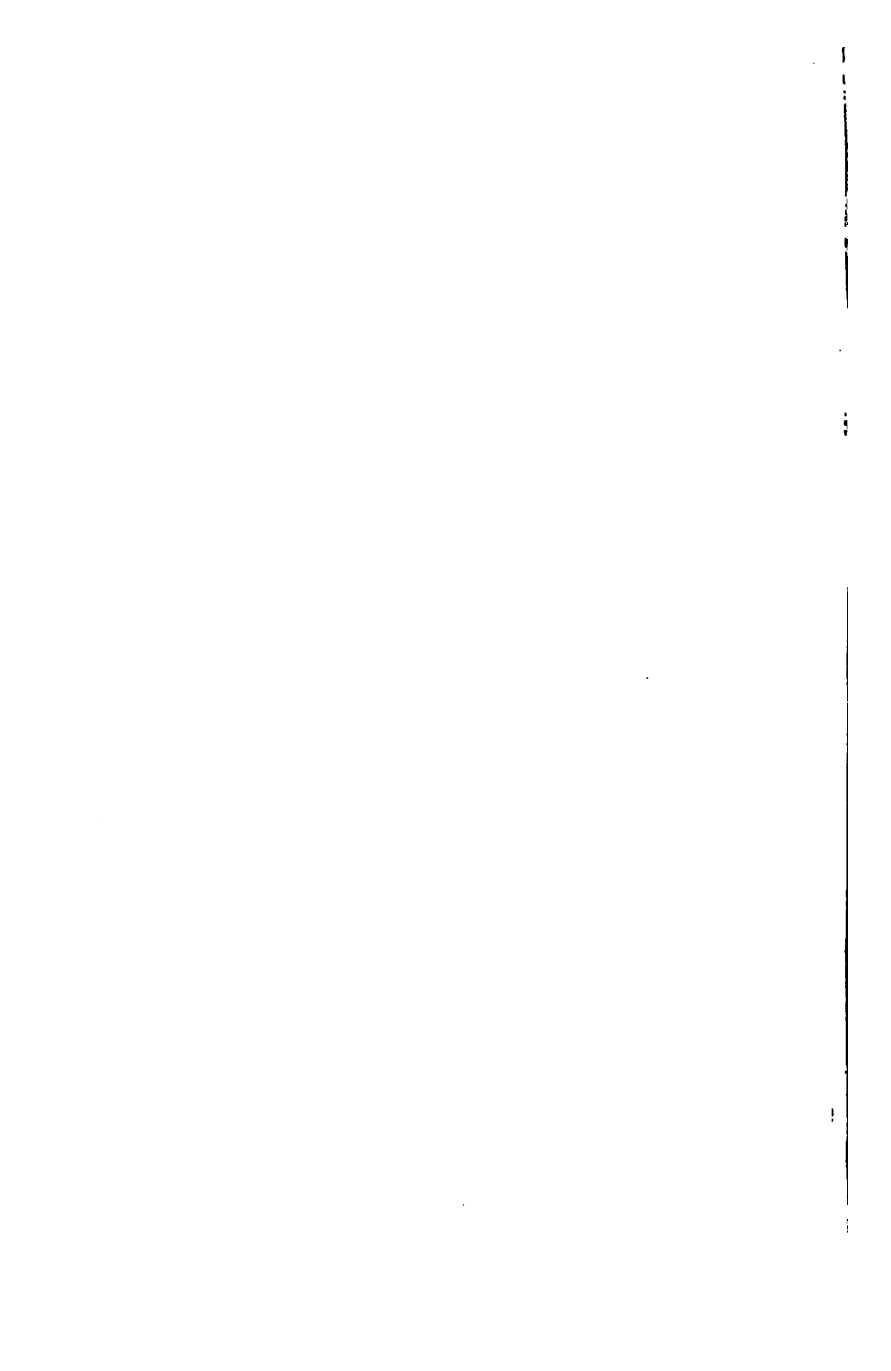
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**AFTER SUNSET**





**AFTER SUNSET**

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

A SUMMER NIGHT, AND  
OTHER POEMS.

VESPERTILIA, AND OTHER  
POEMS.

# AFTER SUNSET

124055

BY

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD  
LONDON & NEW YORK. MDCCCIV

©  
A

**Richard Folkard & Son,  
Devonshire Street, London, W.C.**

IN MEMORIAM H. C. M. W.

(AUGUST 8, 1901)

*The wind blows sweet through the valley,  
A strong wind, pleasant and free ;  
It blows with a rumour of travel  
To the moorland up from the sea.*

*The miles and the desolate distance  
It shatters them all at will,  
While we wait here for a message  
From a voice for ever still.*

*O wind from the great new countries,  
What know you of pain and loss ?  
We are weeping for him in England  
Who died 'neath the Southern Cross.*

*“ Le seul rêve intéresse,  
Vivre sans rêve, qu'est-ce ? ”*

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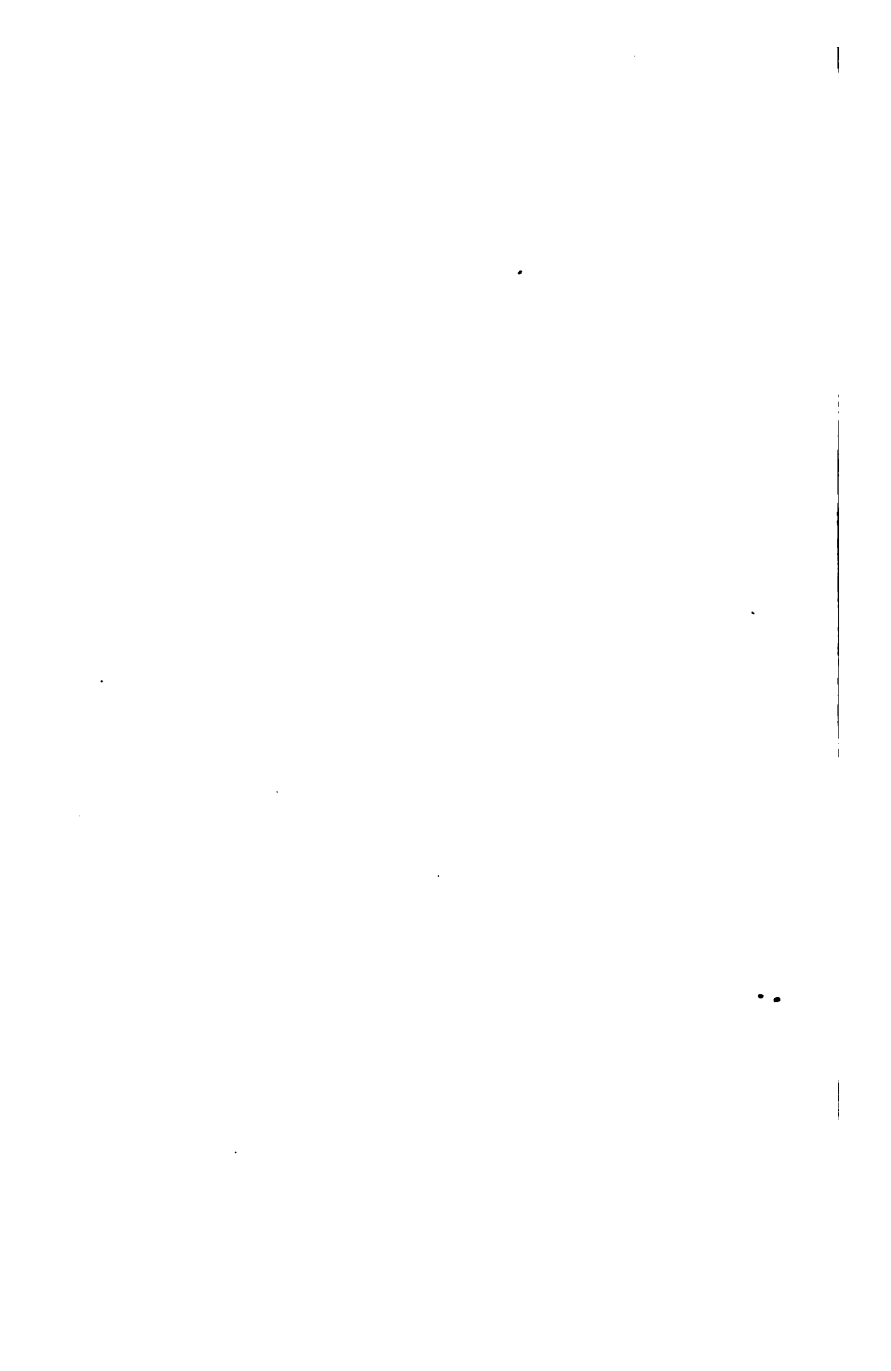
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**AFTER SUNSET**



## ALL-SOULS DAY

To-DAY is theirs—the unforgotten dead—  
For strange and sweet communion set apart,  
When the strong, living heart  
Beats in the dissolute dust, the darkened bed,  
Rebuilds the form beloved, the vanished face,  
Relights the blown-out lamps o' the faded eyes,  
Touches the clay-bound lips to tenderest speech,  
Saying, “Awake—arise!”  
To-day the warm hands of the living reach  
To chafe the cold hands of the long-loved dead;  
Once more the lonely head  
Leans on a living breast, and feels the rain  
Of falling tears, and listens yet again  
To the dear voice—the voice that never in vain  
Could sound the old behest.

Each seeks his own to-day;—but, ah, not I—

I enter not

That sacred shrine beneath the solemn sky ;

I claim no commerce with the unforgot.

My thoughts and prayers must be

Even where mine own fixed lot hereafter lies,

With that great company

For whom no wandering breeze of memory sighs

Through the dim prisons of imperial Death :

They in the black, unfathomed oubliette

For ever and ever set—

They, the poor dead whom none remembereth.

## THE SONG OF SONGS

THE dawn-wind sighs through the trees, and a  
blackbird, waking,  
Sings in a dream to me of dreams and the  
dying Spring,  
Calls from the darkened heart of the wood over  
light leaves shaking,  
Calls from deep hollows of night where the  
grey dews cling.

Soul of the dawn! Dear voice, O fount pellucid  
and golden!  
Triumph and hope and despair meet in your  
magical flow;  
Better than all things seen, and best of the un-  
beholden,  
Song of the strange things known that we  
shall not know.

Yours not the silent months, the splendid burden  
of Summer,  
Dark with the pomp of leaves and heavy with  
flowers full blown,  
Spring and the Dawn are your kingdoms, O  
Spring's first-comer,  
Lordship and largesse of Youth, they are all  
your own.

Song of songs, and joy of joys, and sorrow of  
sorrows,  
Now in a distant forest of dream, and now  
in mine ear,  
Who would take thought of eld, or the shadow  
of songless morrows,  
Who would say "Youth is past," while you  
keep faith with the year?

## LES FOINS

THEY are mowing the meadows now, and the  
whispering, sighing

Song of the scythe breathes sweet on mine  
idle ear,—

Songs of old Summers dead, and of this one  
dying,—

Roses on roses fallen, and year on year ;

Softly as swathes that sink while the long scythe,  
swinging,

Passes and pauses and sweeps through the  
deep green grass :

Strange how this song of the scythe sets the old  
days singing—

Echoes of seasons gone, and of these that pass.

Fair ghost of Youth—from your sea-fragrant  
orchard-closes

Called by the voice of the scythe as it sighs  
and swings—

Tell to me now as you toss me your phantom  
roses,

What was the dream you dreamed through  
those vagrant Springs?

What that forgotten air when the heart went  
maying?

What was the perfume blowing afar, anear?

. . . . .

“ Youth—Youth—Youth ”—the Scythe keeps  
sighing and saying—

“ The rose you saw not—the tune that you  
could not hear.”



## THE PILGRIM

WHERE is the haunt of Peace,  
The place of all release—  
Tell me, O Wind—the House of sweet repose?

“ Night’s dusky tent is spread  
For tired heart and head,  
And very fragrant is Night’s orchard-close.”

What of the soundless deep,  
Those shining plains of Sleep  
Whence the adventurer returns no more?

“ Sleep is a golden sea,  
With billows great and free,  
But still they bear the swimmer back to shore.”

Nay, tell me farther yet,  
Where no swift waters fret,  
Where rose and violet  
Engarland not, nor ever blooms the May—  
Tell me, O Wind, for you must know the way.

“Death’s black pavilion stands  
In the Unshapen Lands,  
And in Death’s garden all the flowers are grey.”

## NIGHT-PIECE

THE moon between the deodars,  
The rising moon, benign and bright,  
Came with her train of shining stars  
And looked on me to-night.

Beneath the high, the dusky boughs,  
Her golden face bent fair and mild,  
Even as it were my Mother's house,  
And I once more her child.

## WANDERLIED

THE blackbird charmed me from my quiet  
chamber,

As in a dream I heard his sweet voice  
calling;

The garden plots were paved with pearl and  
amber,

And all about the walks white petals falling.

Close hid within the misty green-veiled thicket,  
That strange voice drew my heart beyond  
believing,

And as I leaned across the orchard wicket  
I knew not was it glad or was it grieving.

---

But this I knew . . . 'twas to no earthly  
meadows

He called me hence from out his dim wood's  
hollow,

He bade me to the Place of Dreams and  
Shadows.

And one day he will call and I shall follow.

**“PER DOMOS DITIS VACUAS”**

**To V. R.**

**THE** old, old Wind that whispers to old trees,  
Round the dark country when the sun has set,  
Goes murmuring still of unremembered seas  
And cities of the dead that men forget—  
An old blind beggar-man, distained and grey,  
With ancient tales to tell,  
Mumbling of this and that upon his way,  
Strange song and muttered spell—  
Neither to East or West, or South or North,  
His habitation lies,  
This roofless vagabond who wanders forth  
Aye under alien skies—  
A gypsy of the air, he comes and goes  
Between the tall trees and the shadowed  
grass,

And what he tells only the twilight knows . . .

The tall trees and the twilight hear him pass.

To him the Dead stretch forth their strengthless  
hands,

He who campaigns in other climes than this,

He who is free of the Unshapen Lands,

The empty homes of Dis.

## NEIGES D'ANTAN

To R. A. M. S.

SUNLIGHT, and birds, and blossom on the trees—  
What, O my heart, is wanting more than these?  
What shall content if these may not avail? . . .  
Once on a time 'twas joy enough to lie  
Beneath the young leaves and the limpid sky,  
A spell-bound traveller in a fairy-tale.

. . . . .

Oh! nevermore for us the Palace of Spring,  
No more those haunted chambers echoing  
Sweet, sweet, and hollow, to the cuckoo's song;  
Filled with a mellow lustre all day long,  
And lit by golden lamps at evening.  
No more the enchanted woods—their purple haze  
Enveils them yet—but closed are all the ways—



---

The elfin meadows glimmer, deep in dew,  
Misty with flowers—but we have lost the clue;  
There is no path into the magic maze.

. . . . .  
These were youth's emissaries, every one,  
The darting birds between the orchard snows. .  
'Twas Youth that blossomed lovelier than the  
    rose,  
And Youth that fluted in the blackbird's throat,  
And Youth that steered the sun's great golden  
    boat,  
The westering golden galley of the sun.

Youth comes no more for ever—even although  
The fields take flower again, and lilacs blow,  
And pointed leaf-buds gather on the vine :  
Even although the sun should sail and shine  
Bright as of old, and all the thickets rang—  
That sun is set, and mute the spirit that sang.

## GOD'S ACRE

ALMOST I thought I heard the sheep-bells ringing  
    In rippling rhythms, limpid and serene;  
Almost I thought I heard my blackbird singing  
    Deep in the garden where the leaves are  
    green.

Almost I dreamed you stood to watch me  
    sleeping,  
    Lingered a moment with your hand on mine;  
Almost I dreamed you leaned above me weeping,  
    And felt your tears fall on me for a sign.

Almost it seemed I felt the fresh wind blowing  
    Loose little petals from the lindens shed:

Oh, while the sunlight warms the deep grass  
growing,

How should I not forget that I am dead?

Could I forget the summer-time, the haying,

Here in the graveyard, where you think I rest,  
With sharp scythes sounding, with the tall grass  
laying

Its sweet long swathes on my unquiet breast?

## ABSCHIED

THE mountain tops are wrapped in rain,  
And all the ling's fine amethyst  
Is drowned in drifts of white, white mist . . .  
Our hour is come to part again.

By the pale window waves the pine  
Its measured farewells, grave and slow ;  
Silently as the falling snow  
Floats the gold leafage of the vine.

O, very lonely is my way,  
More lonely than your dwelling here ;  
Which is the sharper grief, My Dear,  
For me to go ? . . . for you to stay ?

---

That you must stay . . . that I must go.

O vast estrangement bleak and new ;

Whatever the years may bring to you

I shall not heed, I shall not know.

For the high hill-tops shall touch the plain,

Sun, moon, and stars be overthrown,

And the salt seas be turned to stone

Before we two may meet again.

## NOCTURN

THE air is dark and sweet  
This wet Spring night—  
Spring, of the wandering feet,  
The secret flight,  
Calls through the slow, soft rain—  
O voice of gold!  
Calls to me once again,  
As oft of old.

The darkness sighs and stirs,  
Blind, blind and slow;  
Night-wandering loiterers,  
The veiled airs go ;

---

Mutes of the viewless spell,  
The hidden power,  
These—but my heart knows well  
Its magic hour . . .

My heart's one festival,  
O, far or near,  
The Spring could never call  
And I not hear:  
Deep under graveyard grass,  
It could not be,  
The Spring could never pass  
And I not see . . .

My heart, my heart would break  
Could it be so—  
To think that Spring should wake  
And I not know.

## THE MAGIC LANTHORN

ILLUSION is the lamp that memory burns ;  
Still on the faded pageant of the past,  
Set with gay slides the painted lanthorn turns  
With jewelled lights and changing colours  
cast—

The shadows shift, the lustres wax and wane  
As the dim scene grows blurred or bright again.

Strange seasons rise, strange forests flower and  
fade,

Between the boles, along the dusky grass,  
Threading the ancient marble colonnade  
Rich-vestured shapes with eyes averted pass—  
Or the long rays illumine autumn leas  
With quiet waters and with golden trees.



---

As sunset spreads and furls its golden wings,  
That radiance glows and pales on hollow and  
hill,  
And the veiled ghosts that go like living things . . .  
Still moves the wizard-litten masque—and  
still  
Th' enchanted woods, the haunted meadows  
gleam  
Faint as the storied arras of a dream.

## GLORIA MUNDI

DAWN moves abroad in the air, but the gold  
moon sailing

High in the West, is full and refulgent yet ;  
Tall trees tower to the blue that is fading,  
failing,

Dim in the deeps where the sunken stars have  
set.

There is no sun yet—the leaves stir in their  
sleep and shiver,

Dreaming, perchance, of frost and the solemn  
fall :

Grey as an old glass stretches the lonely river,  
Pale as the stones in the crumbling cloister  
wall.

How was the miracle wrought, and from whence  
unfolden ?

Draws it the night's last sigh—or the day's  
first breath ?

Close, or beginning, that shines where the dawn  
grows golden—

Here is the glory of earth—Is it Birth or  
Death ?



## SPRING SONG

To M. M. S.

THE boughs are heavy with blossom,  
The grass grows deep on the lawn—  
Sweeter and ever sweeter  
The blackbird pipes to the dawn.

The paths lie pale in the twilight,  
As pale as a ring-dove's breast ;  
The birchwood is blue and silver—  
A faint rose fades in the west.

. . . . .

O, air of the April gloaming,  
O, wind of the linnet's wing—  
There is little else to be glad for,  
But my heart is glad of the Spring.

1890

## ZIGEUNERLIED

THE rain is gone, but the leaves are wet,  
The long spathe swells where the buds are set;  
Summer shall wear what the Springtide weaves  
In her green, green bower of leaves.

Dim are the stars though the moon rose bright;  
My chamber is full of the sweet Spring night,  
The dark Spring night and its scented gloom—  
Blue dusk and the lilac-bloom.

The heart of youth and the House of Dream,  
They are here once more while the Spring stars  
gleam;  
The palace-towers of the Eastern tale  
Fell not till the dawn grew pale.

See how their casement, amber-bright,  
Hangs in the wall of the dark Spring night :  
The gypsy halts by the lighted pane  
And then—to the road again.

## THE GOLDEN TOUCH

THE amber dust of sunset fills  
The limits of my narrow room,  
And every sterile shadow thrills  
To golden hope, to golden bloom.

Sweet through the splendour, shrill and sweet,  
Somewhere a neighbouring cage-bird sings,  
Sings of the Spring in this grey street  
While golden glories gild his wings.

Clothed with the sun he breaks to song—  
In vague remembrance, deep delight—  
Of dim green worlds, forsaken long,  
Of leaf-hung dawn and dewy night.

My prisoning bars, transfigured too,  
    Fade with the day, forsworn, forgot—  
Melt in a golden mist—and you  
    Are here, although you know it not.



## SERENADE

Who is it sings the gypsies' song to-night  
To muted strings,  
Deep in the linden shade, beyond the light  
My casement flings ?

Can it be Death who sings ? Ah no, not he,  
For he is old,—  
His voice is like the murmur of the sea  
When light grows cold.

Who is it sings once more, once more again  
The gypsy song ?—  
Song of the open road, the starry plain  
Estranged so long :—

“Come to the woods, come, for the woods are  
green,  
The sweet airs blow,  
The hawthorn boughs the forest boles between  
Are white as snow.” . . .

The wet leaves stir ; the dim trees dream again  
Of vanished Springs :—  
Out in the night, out in the slow, soft rain,  
My lost youth sings.

## AUBADE

To H. L. S.

So late last night I watched with you, and yet  
You come to wake me while the dews are grey,  
Before the sun is forth upon his way,  
Almost as though you feared I might forget.

And still you count, unmoved, importunate,  
Each pitiful item in my sorrow's freight—  
As lovers all their vows before they part  
Over and over recapitulate—  
Though well you know I have it all by heart.

O Grief, this little while forbear, refrain  
Telling your beads so loud, so soon, again,

Tuning your summons to the blackbird's song.  
Here, where the dawn hangs dark in lawn and  
tree,  
Do but a little longer wait for me,  
I, who am mindful of you all day long.

## D'OUTRE TOMBE

BESIDE my grave, if chance should ever bring  
you,  
You, peradventure, on some dim Spring day,  
What song of welcome could my blackbird sing  
you,  
As once in May ?

As [once in May, when all the birds were  
calling,  
Calling and crying through the soft Spring  
rain,  
As once in Autumn with the dead leaves falling  
In wood and lane.

I, in my grave, and you, above, remember—  
And yet between us what is there to say?—  
In Death's disseverance, wider than December  
Disparts from May.

I with the dead, and you among the living,  
In separate camps we sojourn, unallied;  
Life is unkind and Death is unforgiving,  
And both divide.

## OASIS

**FAR** spreads the desert before and the waste  
behind us,

Grey and adust—but here the forest is green,  
Here nor the irons of eld nor of Winter bind us,  
Neither the grief of the known nor the unfore-  
seen.

Faintly the south wind stirs, with the woods  
awaking,

Softly the kind sun shines like a golden flower,  
Wake, O my heart, and remember . . . the  
buds are breaking :

Rest, O my heart, and forget . . . 'tis the  
magic hour !

Joy comes once more ; once more through the  
wet leaves swinging

Vistas of silver and blue in the birch-woods  
gleam ;

In the dusk of the cold spring dawn with a  
blackbird singing—

Singing the Song of Songs by the Gates of  
Dream.



## DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE

A THRUSH is singing on the walnut tree—

The leafless walnut-tree with silver boughs,  
He sings old dreams long distant back to me—  
He sings me back to childhood's happy house.

O to be you, triumphant Voice-of-Gold,

Red rose of song above the empty bowers,  
Turning the faded leaves, the hopes grown cold,  
To Springtide's good green world of growing  
flowers :

Might the great change that turns the old to new

Remould this clay to better blossoming,  
I would be you, Great-Heart, I would be you,  
And sing like you of Love and Death and  
Spring.

## THE WHITE WAY

To H. C. M. W.

THE white way winds across the hill,  
The long hill-road, too high to climb,  
White with the dust in Summer still,  
And white with snow in Winter-time.

To no rich house it leads, nor yet  
To farm or fold or any town,  
But grassy banks its bounds beset  
And wandering lights flit up and down.

The great cloud-shadows gleam and go,  
And sunset sweeps with golden wings  
Those airy parapets where grow  
The sainted stars, like living things.

My steps have never sought the bourne,  
That lofty limit cold and white,  
Yet I may hear, some misty morn,  
A clear voice calling from the height.

Then, when the lost word comes to mind,  
And the dim path lies plain to me,  
Full well I know what I shall find  
Between the daybreak and the wind—  
A green grave and a Calvary.

## A RUINED ALTAR

“The hare shall kittle on thy cold hearth-stane.”

—THOMAS THE RHYMER.

**GREEN** is the valley, and fair the slopes around it,  
Wide waves of barley shining to the sun;  
Softly the stock-doves murmur in the pine trees,  
Deep through the hollow the happy waters  
run.

**Roofless** and ruinous lies the little homestead,  
All the grey walls of it crumbling to the  
ground;  
Only the hearth-place, steadfast and unshaken,  
Stands, like a tomb, 'mid the lusty leafage  
round.

---

Foxglove and hemlock blossom in the garden,  
Where the bright ragwort tramples on the  
rose;

Gone is the gate, and lost the little pathway,—  
High on the threshold the gaunt nettle grows.

Here, long ago, were toil, and thought, and  
laughter,

Poor schemes for pleasures, piteous plans for  
gain,

Love, fear, and strife—for men were born and  
died here—

Strange human passion, bitter human pain.

Now the square hearth-place, shrouded deep in  
shadow,

Holds in its hollow wild things of the  
wood;

Here comes the hawk, and here the vagrant  
swallow

Nests in the niche where cup and trencher  
stood.

Shy furry forms, that hide in brake and covert,  
Leap on the stone where leapt the yellow  
flame;

Up the wide chimney, black with vanished  
smoke-wreaths,  
Clambers the weed that wreathes the mantel-  
frame.

But when cometh Winter and all the weeds are  
withered

In these bare chambers open to the rain,  
Then, when the wind moans in the broken  
chimney,  
And the hare shivers in the sodden lane,

---

Then the old hearth-nook mourns the folk that  
filled it,  
Mourns for the cheer of the red and golden  
blaze ;  
Heaped with the snow-drifts, standing bleak and  
lonely,  
Dreams of the dead and their long-forgotten  
days.

## CHANSON BRETON

(AFTER ALBERT DELPIT)

ALAS, my love is far away,  
And there is naught can comfort me. . . .  
A gallant wooed me yesterday  
Beneath the shady greenwood tree.  
"Fair sir," I said, "thy vows are vain,  
This heart is wrung with heavy pain,  
And he I love. . . . Thou art not He."

With gauds of jewels and of gold,  
And robes of pearl and silver thread,  
Came a great lord who would me wed,  
And give me all his heart to hold.



---

And then came Death. . . . O Sweet and Fair!  
Stretch forth thine arms and clasp me there. . . .  
Dear Death, do thou my body bear  
There where my love is lying cold!  
Only thy breast should stay her head  
Who never may be comforted.

## THE FORLORN HOPE

**THE** laughing children, busy at their play,  
Still build in blithe defiance of the sea—  
Here shall the moat and here the fortress be,  
With battlemented ramparts brave and gay—  
Coming and going in the sandy bay ;  
Eager they toil, nor wholly think to see  
The landward-turning breakers, flowing free,  
Sweep all their faëry castle-courts away.

**Not** long the sea of pain forsakes the shore,  
And still we build our swift-beleagured town,  
Still the frail walls with tottering turrets crown  
Still the poor sand-built citadel restore,—  
Sweeping our pitiful defences down,  
The pitiless tide reclaims us evermore.

**“ EINST, O WUNDER! ”**

**HERE** in the sun the thrushes sing ;  
Here in the sun the tulips shine ;  
White clouds wander and wet leaves swing—  
Where is the shadow of Winter's wing,  
And where this sorrow of yours and mine ?

**The** long, long years and the twilight way  
Close in a mist of the sun's own gold ;  
Youth is lord of the world to-day—  
Only the early dews are grey ;  
Only the last year's leaves are old.

**With** youth's wild heart and with youth's wet  
eyes

**We** wait once more what the hour may bring,

Young once more with the woods and skies,  
Rich with the sun's gold—rich and wise—  
O wind that blows from Paradise!  
O strange soft-whispering Wind of Spring.

## D'OUTREMER

To H.

LEAN from your window when the dim stars fade,  
When the grey dawn-wind stirs your poplar  
tree ;

Look eastward, dear,—O do not be afraid  
Thus, once, to watch for me.

My shallow grave is very far away,  
Where the great plains lie barren oversea,  
But I would meet you at the door of day,  
Did you but call to me.

Call to me once, but once, and I shall hear,  
As your heart bids you call—or silent be—  
And if 'tis silence, then so best, my dear :  
All will be well with me.

## MEMINISSE JUVABIT

THE deep sea shines, unbearable in glory,  
The green wood beckons, luminously dense,  
Yet both will fade as a forgotten story  
When we go hence.

We shall fare forth no more into the meadows,  
The low, salt valleys of the water-plain,  
Among the shallow early-morning shadows—  
No more again.

Here, in the oak-wood with the young]trees  
flinging  
Slim silver boughs athwart a purple sea,  
The chill, sweet ripple of a robin singing  
To you and me.

---

Although the hour has come—our hour is over—  
Surely there seems some solace yet to know  
In twilight time when Memory turns rover  
Across the snow.

It may be it shall please you to remember  
These silver stems, this shadowy woodland  
way,  
To think upon one sun-perfumed September—  
Perchance—some day.

In your late gloaming when the ghosts are  
thronging,  
When daylight fails, and clouds hang low  
and grey,  
You may look back with wonder and with  
longing  
Perchance—some day.

## ARMISTICE

FROM the broad summit of the furrowed wold  
The oxen, resting, gaze with quiet eyes—  
Through the swart shining hide's obscurities  
Shows, sharply hewn, the gaunt frame's massive  
mould,  
Wide spread the horns in branching outlines  
bold—  
Solemn they stand beneath the brooding skies,  
Impassive, grave, as guardian deities  
Carved on some stone sarcophagus of old.

Proud 'neath the yoke bends every stately head;  
What tho' the burden drag, the goad-sting gall,  
Rest is Earth's recompense for each and all,  
Ours, as for these mute thralls of trailing tread,  
Emblems of labour immemorial,  
The dignity of toil incarnated.



## BIRD OF PARADISE

THROUGH the wood, through the wood, sweet  
and shrill and clear,  
Round the hill, down the vale, still the music  
rings,  
Now piping far away, fluting now anear—  
'Tis the robin sings.

One there was, years ago, hearkened to a song,  
Deep in a sunny wood listened all alone,  
Listened the space of a Summer morning long,  
Ere he turned home again half his days were  
flown.

Bird of the tawny breast, bird of crystal tongue,  
You have your magic too, to charm the years  
away—

How they shine forth again, days when all was  
young,  
Here in the hazel-wood while you sing to-  
day. . . .

How they come back again, happy days and  
dear,  
Hope of youth, heart of youth, unremembered  
Springs—

O, for a little moment Spring is here  
While the robin sings.

## THE HOUSE DESOLATE

So still the old house lies, so dull, so grey,  
The dews of dawn forget to hallow it ;  
Here come no sweet birds singing, night or day,  
By these bare eaves no building swallows flit.

Sunk in dim dreams it lies as in a swoon—  
Dreams of a distant city hid from sight,  
The enchanted city of the sun and moon,  
The golden market of the world's delight.

Pale as the dead are they that dwell herein,  
Worn with vain strife and wrung with vain  
regret;

## THE WHITE BIRD

*"Zigeunerkind hat keiner Ruh."*

THE wild bird 'bode in the tame bird's tether,  
The stray white bird with the broken wing,  
And the quick, bright eyes like a hunted  
thing—

'Twas here, where the roofs crowd close together,  
He came one day in a stormy Spring.

Flung by a freak of the west wind hither,  
'Tis well, said we, with our vagrant guest,  
The white wild bird in the tame bird's nest,  
No more the sport of the whence and whither,  
But calm kind fortunes of ease and rest.

---

Here in the fine town fenced and tended,  
Sheltered and safe from day to day,  
Went never a wandering thought astray?  
Did he dream, perchance, of the old life ended,  
The wide world's joy and the wide world's  
way ?

The low sun's fire and the long low shadows  
On outland valleys; and oh, once more  
Thunder of surf on the sounding shore,  
The grey sea-marshes, the wide sea-meadows,  
Wind-bent boughs of the sycamore ?

The wild bird came and the wild bird tarried,  
In a green courtyard guarded well—  
The first buds broke and the last leaves fell—  
What was the summons the storm-wind carried,  
And what the sign of the broken spell ?

. . . . .

Oh, the word of the wind and the winged white  
weather!

The swift shrill call of the whirling blast,  
And the bond is snapped and the sojourn  
past—

At the sight, at the touch of a white snow-  
feather

The wanderer's child goes free at last.

---

## CHILDREN OF THE MIST

THE cold airs from the river creep  
About the murky town,  
The spectral willows, half asleep,  
Trail their thin tresses down  
Where the dim tide goes wandering slow,  
Sad with perpetual ebb and flow.

The great blind river, cold and wide,  
Goes groping by the shore,  
And still where water and land divide  
He murmurs evermore  
The overword of an old song,  
The echo of an ancient wrong.

There is no sound 'twixt stream and sky,  
But white mists walk the strand,  
Waifs of the night that wander by,  
Wraiths from the river-land—  
While here, beneath the dripping trees,  
Stray other souls more lost than these.

Voiceless and visionless they fare,  
Known all too well to me—  
Ghosts of the years that never were,  
The years that could not be—  
And still, beneath the eternal skies  
The old blind river gropes and sighs.



## SPRING, THE STRANGER

'Tis Spring, and yet the east wind blows  
In eddies down the dusty lane,  
Nor leaf nor bud the orchard shows  
While palm and primrose wax and wane.

Clear shine the days, so hard, so bright  
With stony lustre shining still  
On meadows gay in gold and white,  
And glittering waters flowing chill.

Was it for this the Winter went,  
Was it for this in wistful wise  
We waited, sure and well content,  
This changeling with the vacant eyes?

The sunlit sky stares bleak and blue,  
High with a pomp of pale clouds piled,  
Sure never thus the Spring we knew,  
In bygone seasons wept and smiled.

This is the Spring—but O, for those  
With youth's own fragrance sweet and vain,  
Lost Springs that blossomed like the rose,  
Dead Springs that cannot rise again.

## DE PROFUNDIS

THROUGH the melancholy Winter sunset  
Pale with shores of pearl and seas of amber,  
High in air above the silent garden,  
Floats a song of sweet, of strange denial,  
Clear and mellow, insolent with triumph,  
Though the snow-wind sighs about the branches  
Of the bare trees  
Stark in dank and dripping desolation,  
In this graveyard that was once a garden  
Rich with sun and redolent with plenty—  
Once?—ah never—Nay, but look, but listen.

. . . . .  
Joy of joys ! a blackbird in the cedar,  
Flings a golden gauntlet of defiance,

Gallant and gay.

Dares the Winter to his worst endeavour—

And the boughs once more

Rustle thick with leaves and jewelled fruitage ;

Loose-leaved roses blossom by the fountain

In the perfumed dusk :

See, the skies are hung with Summer purple,

Summer stars and dew.

. . . . .

Dear, with us, too,

So it shall be, though the grey years darken ;

Though a wintry world lie waste around us,

Thus it shall be, and the cold close find us

Neither old, nor sad, nor hope-forsaken ;

Here the Spring shall linger quick and fragrant,

Here the full heart still shall sing of Summer.

IN MEMORIAM R. A. M. S.

You are not here, and yet it is the Spring—  
The tide you loved, compact of sun and rain,  
And all sweet life and colour wakening,  
Losing your touch the world falls grey again.

With you we strayed through faëry palaces,  
Threaded green forests dark with ancient trees,  
Solemn with pomp of immemorial shade,  
Where by still pools the wood-nymphs bathed  
and played :

Unconscious as a happy child at play,  
Of all forgotten splendours you were free,  
And all the present wealth of night and day—  
O, you, and you alone, could lead the way,  
Yours was the key.

Yours was the golden touch, O loved and lost,  
Or ever the wintry years that bring the frost  
Could blur your radiant spirit, you are fled.  
Eld shall not make a mock of that dear head,  
Nor Time account you with his tempest-tost.  
Young with imperishable youth you sped :  
Yours is the peace, ours the unnumbered cost.

## THE COUP DE GRACE

PAIN and the Years press hard upon our track,  
Sleuth-hounds of Time and his grey huntsman,  
Death ;

And now we hide—and now would double back—  
And now we stand and halt awhile for breath.

Most green and goodly is the hunting-ground,  
With pleasant shade and golden glints of sun,  
Yet still we hear the baying of the hound,  
Or far, or near, until the chase be done.

The gaunt grey Huntsman stalks behind the  
trees

Until the labouring heart is spent and broke,  
Till the doomed quarry stumbles to its knees  
And he may stoop to deal the mercy-stroke.

## KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM

(JUNE 4TH, 1902.)

**STRONG, swift, and silent, in your iron might  
Steadfast you wrought, forging day from chaos  
and night,  
Purging the land of strife and blunder and  
wrong—  
You—direct and keen as an arrow's flight—  
You—remote as the hills from the babbling  
throng:  
How should you care for laurel-garland or song?  
You, the Lord of the Sword, silent and swift  
and strong.**



## GENERAL VISCOUNT KITCHENER

(JULY 12TH, 1902).

“And, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey  
in the carcase of the lion.”

LONG, long ago a strong man fought a lion,  
Wrestled bare-handed in his own stark might,  
Steadfast of eye and limb and grip of iron—  
So he prevailed and conquered in the fight :  
And in a little while from out that strife  
Was sweetness born and promise of new life.

Out of the Strong the Sweet—O you who  
wrought it,  
How shall we praise you, brave, and kind,  
and fleet ?

The good fight done, shall we not say who  
fought it,

Who from the War's dark lees wrung out the  
Sweet ?

Gladly we speak your name, proudly we praise  
you,

You whose renown shall know no mortal lease ;  
Fame has no more to say, no height to raise you,  
Lord of the Sword—but also Lord of Peace.

# SONGS OF CHILDHOOD

(To R. B. M. W.)



**“WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST  
· DOTH CORRUPT”**

**IF, peradventure, in the years to be  
You come, O Child, to narrower needs of me  
As the world widens to you—even although  
Life touch you with indifference as you go—  
No longer hand in hand and heart to heart,  
Should we be borne apart,  
Thrust far asunder in the hurrying press,  
Even so I shall not fare companionless.  
I 'mid the last late loiterers wandering slow,  
With wearied, equable pace,  
The solace of the sunset on my face—  
The sunset spacious and low—**

With tired feet in the dew,  
Lifting mine eyes where you  
Far in the forefront of the pageant ride,  
Mailed in the splendours of your strength and  
pride.

You—yet another you  
Yourself as verily—leans his cheek to mine,  
Lilts inarticulate eloquence divine  
With babbling call and coo. . . .

The small down-vestured head,  
Golden and faint,  
Pale as the aureole of a child saint,  
Dear as a tender thought of one long dead ;  
The innocent eyes ; the sweet  
Impetuous little feet ;—  
These, though the world went mourning for  
your sake,  
Not the sheer tomb could take. . . .

The sweet eyes plead; the fluttering hands  
implore;

The frail arms cling as fondly as before  
The strange years worked their will.

Child of my heart, though change and time divide  
Me and your later semblance, you abide.  
However time may devastate or fulfil,  
Safe, incorruptible, shall my treasure hide;  
Borne on my breast, light-pattering at my side,  
The fair ghost linger still.

## ALLERSEELEN

STREW violets about the floor,  
And scour the brazen platters bright ;  
For one who aye was here before  
Will come once more again to-night.

Draw the tall settle to the fire,  
And stir the sunken logs to glow ;  
Hang the horn-lanthorn by the byre,  
And sweep away the sprinkling snow.

Set the old playthings in their place—  
The china lamb, the wooden sword,  
The chessmen in the painted case,  
The bugle with the scarlet cord,



---

The plate with clustered rosebuds gay,  
The little cup all gold and white—  
Reach down his ringdove's cage, and lay  
The frozen swallow out of sight.

So far to come, so far to go—  
So cold, so black this midnight is—  
So light the footsteps sound and low ;  
We shall not hear the sound of his.

Set wider still the open door ;  
Sweep yet again the snow, the sleet ;  
Bring out the white, warm cloak he wore,  
White furs to wrap his little feet. . . .

O do not stir, . . . O do not speak, . . .  
Be still, with never sound or sign !  
Let me but feel the cool, soft cheek  
Pressed once again to mine.

## A CHILD'S GARDEN

THE garden wastes : the little child is grown ;  
Rank with high weeds and blossoms overblown,  
His tiny territory boasts no more  
The dainty many-coloured mien it wore  
In the old time,  
When the stout toiler of the summer's prime  
Wrought in his glory, sun-flushed and bemired,  
With spade and water-can, nor ever tired,  
Yet found the bedward stair so steep to climb.

Pink and forget-me-not and mignonette,  
Red double daisies accurately set,  
We had them all by heart and more beside,  
Purple and yellow pansies, solemn-eyed

---

As little owlets in their tufted bowers. . . .  
The weeds have come and driven forth the  
flowers.

Summer with all her roses onward hastes.  
The garden wastes—  
This poor small garden, sweet in summers known.  
The garden wastes: the little child is grown.

How good those summers, gay and golden-lit,  
When down the walks the white-frosted form  
would flit,  
Laden and all-triumphant with its load ;  
That narrow pleasaunce, and the spoils of it !  
The various spoils of it so proudly shown,  
So royally bestowed. . . .  
Green wrinkled cress and rosy radish node,  
The unsunned strawberry's dimly coral cone,—  
There be none such treasures now: the child is  
grown.

The fish-tailed merchild carved in crumbling  
stone

Wreathed with loose straggling roses, reigns  
alone,

Th' abandoned idol still smiles gravely on.

The other child is gone.

New play, new paths, the old sweet hours  
disown ;

Poor graven image on your rain-worn throne

Smiling the foolish smile,

Rose petals fall around you yet awhile,

Nor may I mourn this little plot defaced,

The bare nest whence the fledgling bird has  
flown,

*His* garden-waste :

The little child is grown.

## THE WHITE LADY

The white stone lady on the grass  
Beneath the walnut tree,  
She never smiles to see me pass,  
Or blows a kiss to me.

She holds a cup in both her hands  
With doves upon its brink,  
And oh, so very still she stands  
The thrushes come to drink.

She will not listen when I speak,  
She never seemed to know,  
When once I climbed to kiss her cheek  
And brush away the snow.

She never took the daisy ring  
I gave her yesterday ;  
She never cares to hear me sing,  
Or watch me at my play.

But, still she looks through sun or rain,  
Towards the garden door,  
As though some child should come again  
Who often came before.

Some little child who went away,  
Before they knew of me.  
Another child who used to play  
Beneath the walnut tree.

## THE CHILD ALONE

THEY say the night has fallen chill—

But I know naught of mist or rain,  
Only of two small hands that still  
Beat on the darkness all in vain.

They say the wind blows high and wild

Down the long valleys to the sea ;  
But I can only hear the child,  
Who weeps in darkness, wanting me.

Beyond the footfalls in the street,

Above the voices of the bay,  
I hear the sound of little feet,  
Two little stumbling feet astray.

Oh, loud the Autumn wind makes moan,  
The desolate wind about my door,  
And a little child goes all alone  
Who never was alone before.



## THE OPEN DOOR

O LISTEN for her step when the fire burns  
hollow,

When the low flame whispers and the white  
ash sinks,

When all about the chamber shadows troop and  
follow

As drowsier yet the hearth's red watchlight  
blinks.

While bare black night through empty case-  
ments staring

Waits to storm the wainscot till the fire lies  
dead,

Fast along the snow-bound waste little feet are  
faring—

Hush—and listen—listen—but never turn  
your head.

Leave the door upon the latch—she could never  
reach it—

You would hear her crying, crying there till  
break of day,

Out on the cold moor 'mid the snows that bleach  
it,

Weeping as once in the long years past away.

Lean deeper in the settle-corner lest she find  
you—

Find and grow fearsome, too afraid to stay :

Do you hear the hinge of the oaken press behind  
you ?

There all her toys were kept, there she used  
to play.

Do you hear the light, light foot, the faint sweet  
laughter ?

Happy stir and murmur of a child that plays :

---

Slowly the darkness creeps up from floor to  
rafter

Slowly the falling snow covers all the ways.

Falls as it fell once on a tide past over.

Golden the hearth glowed then, bright the  
windows shone ;

And still, still she comes through the sullen  
drifts above her

Home to the cold hearth though all the lights  
are gone.

Far or near no one knew—none would now  
remember—

Where she wandered no one knew, none will  
ever know ;

Somewhere, Spring must give her flowers, some-  
where white December

Call her from the moorland to her playthings  
through the snow.

## NOCTURN

**OUTSIDE** his nursery window

A tall green pine-tree stands,  
And every night it beckons

And waves its shadowy hands :  
Whether the breeze flies lightly,

Or whether the winds blow wild,

It's " Good night to you now, O Pine-tree,"

" Good night to you, little Child."

The bright moon looks through its branches,

The thin moon splendid and new ;

It spreads a snare for the dewdrops,

And stars hang sparkling through :

But moonlight, and starlight, and sunlight,

The great winged winds and the breeze,—

---

With the little child to wave to,  
What should it care for these ?

When in the lonely midnight,  
Awake with the storm and rain,  
He opens the chink in the curtain,  
To peer through the window-pane,  
He can hear the pine-tree saying—  
Over and over, too—  
“ The night is wet and windy,  
But I'm staying awake with you.”

Every night at bedtime  
A small hand waves to the tree,  
A small face smiles through the twilight,  
Pressing the pane to see ;  
And whether the breeze flies lightly,  
Or whether the winds blow wild,  
It's “ Good night to you now, O Pine-tree”—  
“ Good night to you, little Child.”

## AN OUTLAND VOYAGE

**THE** tall ships come and the tall ships go  
Across the purple bay ;  
But there's never a ship so fair and fine,  
Never a ship so brave as mine,  
As mine that sailed away.

Bright in the light and grey in the shade,  
And white when the waves grow dun,  
The gulls go by with their great wings spread :  
But the sails of my ship were gold and red,  
And they shone like the setting sun.

They make good cheer in the tavern here,  
The sailors home from sea ;  
But the crew of my ship they feast with kings,  
In emerald crowns and opal rings,  
And coats of the cramoisie.

---

Fine is the freight their ships bring in,  
But mine bears finer far—  
Pearls and roses, and links of gold,  
Myrrh and amber, and rich bales rolled,  
As bright as the morning star.

'Twas May-day morn that my ship set sail,  
With the dew on her figure-head—  
Her bows were wreathed with the hawthorn  
bloom,  
As she stole through the dusk of the dawning  
gloom  
Like a ghost, or a bride new wed.

The May-days dawn and the May-days die,  
And the hour draws near, I know ;  
The day when my ship shall come for me  
To carry me back to mine own countrie,  
East of the sun, by the outmost sea,  
In the heart of the Long Ago.

## THE GOLDEN AGE

O WHEN I was a little child the flowers grew  
    shoulder-high,  
And the weeds had each some pretty thing to  
    show,  
There were jewels in the pebbly brook and  
    jewels in the sky,  
And a thousand fighting Pixies in the snow.

There were secret ways to Fairyland through  
    every little hill,  
And talking birds and squirrels in the woods,  
And tiny singing fishes in the pond behind the  
    mill,  
And honey-dew in all the harebells' hoods.



---

O when I was a little child I had a golden tree,  
With golden boughs and blossoms overhead,  
And there were golden chimneys to my house  
that used to be,  
And a sound of golden wings about my bed.

## THE TIME-TRAVELLER

(To H. G. W.)

“TICK-TOCK ! such a great big clock  
To speak so hoarse and low !  
He stands so straight, and he looks so tall  
When the firelight shines on the wainscot wall,  
With wonderful things to show :—  
A golden bridge and a golden boat,  
Golden fish in a golden moat,  
Golden apples on golden boughs,  
Golden folk in a high gold house,  
Golden birds on a spangled sky,  
Golden pheasants that flit and fly  
Where the golden blossoms blow—

And oh, I wonder and wonder why,  
If he can't speak better, or just won't try?  
But nobody seems to know."

*Tick-tock!* such an old, old clock!  
Such a long, long while to go!  
A hundred years and a half again  
He has watched the sun and the wind and rain,  
The grass and the Winter snow;  
For a hundred years and a half has seen  
The old leaves fade and the new spring green,  
And the little children grow.

"*Tick-tock!*" says the old, old clock  
(And his voice sounds tired and slow),  
"A hundred years and anigh fourscore  
Over and over, and still once more.  
Oh, Little Child, I have said my say  
The dark night through, and the livelong day;



I have watched your folk as they came and  
went,  
Small and sturdy, and big and bent,  
Goldenhair—Greybeard—babes and men,  
I watch them now as I watched them then,  
Many a year ago.

“ The grown folk look in my full-moon face,  
But the children peer at my painted case  
With its birds and flowers; and the grown folk  
all—

‘ Listen ! ’ they say, when aloud I call  
Telling the hour ; but the children hear  
Tinkling stories sweet and clear.  
I tell them tales of the China Seas,  
Of golden parrots on golden trees,  
Where pig-tailed people little and great  
Fish for stars by a palace gate  
With their golden rods a-row.

---

" I never rest and I never sleep,  
I never laugh and I never weep ;  
Oh, Little Boy, with the big blue eyes,  
Who sleeps and wakens and laughs and cries,  
I am very old, I am very wise ;  
I never stop, and I never play ;  
With never a halt nor a holiday  
I tell my tale and I say my say—  
*Tick-tock !*" (said the tall old clock  
To the Little Child in the short white frock)  
" And *now* do you wonder so ?"

## THE GREEN PAVILIONS

THE high pagodas of the pine,  
Through whose dim floors the South Wind  
sings,  
Whose jewelled tassels toss and shine  
Astir with airy whisperings,  
There, where green jalousies divide—  
Shift—for an instant blown aside—  
I see a glint of rainbow wings.

All day, until the sun has set,  
“The pines are full of birds!” they say.  
But I know better—never yet  
Shone feathered folk in such array :  
When the moon rises, round and low,  
O then I see, O then I know,  
The Little People dance and play.

## GOLDEN FEATHER

SILVER and gold is his Topknot bold,  
Golden and silver, too ;  
A swirl to the left and a curl to the right,  
Sunshiny billows all burnished and bright  
With a twirl like the tail of a Q.

Valiant and gay through the whole of the day,  
Proud as a peacock's crest,  
It ruffles like this and it ripples like that,  
Waves like a plume 'neath the brim of his hat,  
Flaunts it abroad with the best.

Haughty and high as the sun in the sky

His Topknot shines on his head—

But oh, when the Dustman comes sauntering by,

When a fat little hand rubs a shut little eye ;

Down droops the flag 'twixt a song and a sigh

As it sinks in his white little bed.



## THE ORCHARD OF THE MOON

So white with frost my garden flowers,  
The blinking sun seems half afraid  
To shine among its sparkling bowers,  
Lest their frail garlands fade.

With dust of silver and of snow,  
From elfin uplands wide and white,  
They came, their faëry crops to sow—  
The People of the Night.

The Little People, lithe and slim,  
With filmy wings and golden eyes—  
Through the blue twilight cold and dim,  
I heard their mocking cries.

"Sleep sound, O Sun! sleep sound and sweet!  
Sunk in your purple-curtained bed,  
The snow draws nigh on feathered feet,  
And all your flowers are dead."

"O Lady Moon!" is all their song,  
"Speed thou our harvest, Lady Moon!  
Shine on our orchards all night long,  
So they may ripen soon."

And still they laugh, and still they sing;  
Their rustling voices come and go  
Like last year's leaves that fall in Spring,  
Or birds amid the snow.

Nor, till the harvest-time be done  
Of faëry flower, of faëry fruit,  
Shall he return, the golden Sun,  
To earthly bud and shoot.

## SEPTEMBER SONG

PEACHES, apricots, and plums,  
Apples, when October comes,  
Yellow pears and purple grapes,  
Filberts in their folded capes,  
Nectarines that hang or fall  
By the sunny southern wall,  
Wrinkled melons gold and green,  
Rosy cherries crisp and clean,  
Oranges from overseas—  
These you have, and more than these—  
Ripened fruits for pleasant cheer,  
Every day in all the year.  
“Greedy birds,” we hear you say,  
As you watch the gardener lay  
Nets upon the cherry boughs,

Lest the little thieves carouse,  
Careful meshes stake and spread  
All about the strawberry bed.  
We the feathered folk who sing,  
In your gardens all the Spring,  
Have no croft nor orchard-close ;  
In the hedge our harvest grows.  
Hind or gardener have we none  
Save the kindly Autumn sun,  
And our only granary  
Has for roof the starry sky.  
Very odd it seems to us,  
Children, that you wander thus ;  
Strange it seems, and ever strange  
Folks so rich should want to range.  
Still we wonder, wonder why,  
O great Birds that cannot fly,  
You should leave your loaded trees  
To come and steal our blackberries !

## LA MARMOTTE

(AFTER L. VAN BEETHOVEN)

*“ Avec que si, avec que la, avec que la marmotte.”*

THE way is dark before us as we go,  
And cold the mountain wind ;  
The little flying feathers of the snow  
Float round us soft and blind.

Now shut you close those little twinkling eyes,  
Safe in my coat, asleep ;—  
I shall know surest where the river lies,  
And where the drifts are deep.

Sleep, little prying one—'tis cold and still,  
Naught but the dark to see—  
Yet golden-bright behind yon crest of hill  
The village lights may be.

Soft on the snow my naked feet fall light,  
Swift as the brown owls fly ;—  
Now never fear but we shall sup to-night,  
My Marmot, you and I.